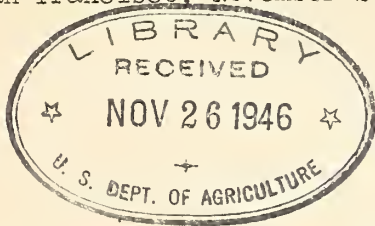
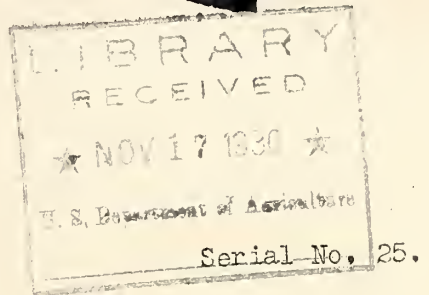


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Excerpt from a radio talk by
W. W. Vincent, Chief, Western District,
Food and Drug Administration, Department
of Agriculture, delivered through KGO,
San Francisco, November 27, 1930.



HOW TO READ THE LABEL

Sea Foods

Let's start with sardines and herring. First, a herring is not a sardine, nor is a true sardine a herring. But, commercially speaking, any small canned fish of the herring family is a sardine. I will tell you why. The dictionary definition for "Sardine" recognizes as such, any of the small Clupeoid fishes, and a Clupeoid fish is one belonging to the herring family. The herring family not only includes the true sardine, or Pilchard, but also the Shad, Sprat, and Brisling. Lots of these fish are consumed. How many cases of sardines do you imagine were packed in California last year? Nearly 3,900,000 cases. And Maine and Massachusetts contributed about 2,000,000 cases. Large quantities are also imported.

In British Columbia, they pack the true sardines and label them "Pilchard". In California, this same Pilchard is labeled "Sardine," while in Maine a young herring takes the name "Maine Sardine." It is a Pilchard again that takes the name "Sardine" in France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, while up in the North Sea countries we find men canning sprats and labeling them as "Brisling" or "Sprats" or "Sardines."

My friends, one of the very early cases instituted under the Federal food and drugs act involved the seizure of California Sardines which were labeled in part as "California Broiled Mackerel." Since then, many importations of fish have been detained at time of entry and required to be properly relabeled.

When you buy sardines, read the label. Sardines are available to you in various size packages as necessitated by size of fish and packing process employed. The British Columbia Sardine--- usually labeled "Pilchard"---as well as some packed in California, reach you in the tall salmon-style can. These consist of rather large fish, placed in the can raw, with nothing but salt added, after which they are cooked within the sealed can. The packing of sardines in large oval cans is largely restricted to California. You will find them labeled as "Packed in Tomato Sauce," "Packed in Mustard Sauce," or "Packed in Wine Sauce." Also, there are small flat cans, of approximately four ounce contents, in which much smaller fish are used. You generally find these packed in olive oil. You generally find the Maine sardine of commerce, (a herring), packed in cottonseed oil or mustard sauce.

"Brisling" is the Norwegian term applied to the particular species of sardine canned up there. "Sprat" is the English term for the same fish. The finest of these imported from Scandinavian countries are packed in olive oil. Their labels will read "Norwegian Sardines," or "Norwegian Brisling," or "Brisling Sardines." Norwegian packers put up a cheaper grade called "Moussa" sardines, when the sea herring similar to our Maine sardines are utilized.

You may occasionally encounter packs of sardines from Finland and Russia, labeled as "Sprats". Sometimes, instead of olive oil, a blend of other vegetable oils is used and the label will read "packed in salad oil." Sprats and Brisling sardines are smoked in the course of preparations. When American sardines are smoked, they are usually so labeled.

"Salacchini" is a salted, dry and pressed sardine which comes to you in small wooden tubs. You sometimes see them in the grocery store with the fish laid out like spokes in a wheel. This product is consumed largely by people of Italian lineage, but large quantities have been packed in California for shipment to the Orient.

"Sardines in Salt," from Italy, are imported generally in round cans of various sizes. This product is made by dry-salting the fish in large tubs. This draws considerable of their moisture, after which they are placed in cans, more salt added, then sealed. The net-weight declaration appearing on the can is the weight of the fish exclusive of such brine and salt as may be found within the can. You wouldn't want to buy that salt at a sardine price.

You are probably familiar with "Anchovies in Salt," a product prepared from anchovies, in identically the same manner as sardines. The "Fillets" which frequently garnish your salads are the sides of the anchovies which, after curing, have been skinned and freed from the backbone and most of the small rib bones. They reach you both in cans, ^{and small bottles.} and usually in olive oil. Frequently they are rolled and some contain a caper, which is a flower bud.

You find anchovy paste and sardine paste in the finer grocery stores in small packages or tubes. This is the paste made from ground salted anchovies or sardines. Epicures know these products, but here's something they don't know. Your Food and Drug Administration has detained many importations of "Anchovy Fillets" or "Anchovies" because "Needle Fish," a cheaper and inferior product, had been packed and labeled "Anchovies." They have detained anchovy and sardine pastes because they were artificially colored, either with iron oxide or prohibited coal-tar dyes. The reason for artificial color was to give a rich reddish brown appearance. You get that naturally if the fish has been handled properly in its preparation.

You may encounter an imported product labeled "Anchovy Sprats." My friends, those are not anchovies. They are Sprats. The Department allows them to be labeled in that manner, because for years they have been sold as anchovies in Scandinavian countries and the name in part characterizes the style of pack. They are unsterilized, pickled fish, usually handled under refrigeration. They reach you in cans, miniature barrels, or other unusual packages.

Should the labels on any of these fish above mentioned read "Packed in Oil," you may assume that cottonseed, peanut, or other suitable vegetable oil has been employed. They will specify olive oil if such is used, because that is considered as denoting a superior product.